

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The non-final office action of November 27, 2006, has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Reconsideration and allowance of the instant application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-25 remain in this application. Applicants have not amended the claims but include a listing of the claims for the convenience of the Examiner.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-6, 9-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,760,277 B1 to Farooq ("*Farooq*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,996,758 B1 to Herron, et al. ("*Herron*"). Claims 7 – 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Farooq* and *Herron* as applied to Claim 6, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,621,767 B1 to Kattan ("*Kattan*"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under § 103(a), three criteria must exist: 1) there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine the reference teachings; 2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success; and 3) the prior art reference(s) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. *See* MPEP § 706.02 (j); *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

In response to the previous Action, Applicants identified a lack of proper motivation for combining *Farooq* and *Herron*. In response, the Action still has not provided any such proper motivation. Again, even assuming, without admitting, that the combination of *Farooq* and *Herron* does teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 1, there is no proper motivation for combining the two references. The Federal Circuit has repeatedly stated that the limitations of a claim in a pending application cannot be used as a blueprint to piece together prior art in hindsight, *In re Dembiczak*, 50 U.S.P.Q.2d 1614 (Fed. Cir. 1999), and that the Patent Office should *rigorously* apply the requirement that a teaching or motivation to combine prior art references needs to be provided. *Id.* (emphasis added). Applicants still contend that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine *Farooq* with *Herron*.

The Action provides the same unsupported motivation to combine stating, “[t]his modification would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time invention was made, because one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that configuring a first set of configurable logic blocks to be first testing circuitry would provide the opportunity to configure the logic blocks to test other parts of the system..” (Action, page 4). This is not a motivation to combine references, but is a conclusion that has apparently been reached after having benefited from reading Applicants’ own disclosure, and is thus impermissible hindsight. To correct this lack of motivation, Applicants respectfully request an Action that provides some evidence that the combination takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made.

Although *Farooq* and *Herron* describe FPGAs, neither provides a motivation to combine its teachings with those of the other. Applicants respectfully submit that that there is no motivation or suggestion to combine *Farooq* with *Herron*. Even assuming that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning, the Action again provides no evidence that the combination takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, nor does the Action again provide any evidence that the combination includes knowledge other than that gleaned from Applicants’ disclosure. Thus, the combination is improper based on hindsight. As the Action fails to cite any portion of *Farooq* or *Herron* for the motivation to combine the references, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the present rejection.

With respect to the rejection of claims 7 and 8, the Action again fails to cite any portion of *Farooq*, *Herron*, or *Kattan* as evidence of the motivation to combine the references. The Action merely states, “[t]his modification would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, because one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that it would provide the opportunity to provide N-bit input to the second set of configurable logic blocks.” Again, such a statement is nothing more than a blanket comment without any support in any of the references. The Action merely attempts to piece together various references to reject the claim without any cited evidence of motivation to combine the references together.

Applicants' claims 2-12, which depend on claim 1, are patentably distinct over the art of record for at least the same reasons as their ultimate base claim and further in view of the novel features recited therein. For example, Applicants' claim 3 recites, among other features, "configuring a third set of configurable logic blocks to be second testing circuitry; and operating the third set, concurrently with the first set, to test a fourth set of configurable logic blocks." The combination of *Farooq* and *Herron*, even if proper, fails to teach or suggest at least this feature. In particular, the combination of references fails to teach concurrent operation of sets to test another set.

Claims 13-17 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,036,473 to Butts, et al. ("*Butts*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,470,485 B1 to Cote, et al. ("*Cote*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants had cited in their previous response, a lack of proper motivation for combining *Butts* and *Cote*. The Action still has not provided any such proper motivation. Again, even assuming, without admitting, that the combination of *Butts* and *Cote* does teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 13, there is no proper motivation for combining the two references. The Action still fails to provide any evidence in the references for motivation to combine them and merely provides the same motivation to combine by stating, "[t]his modification would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time invention was made, because one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that using the method of testing routing portions in an emulation system would provide the opportunity to verify all parts of the interconnect within the IC correctly and consistently route all signals in timely and accurate fashion between configurable logic blocks." (Action, page 7). The Action provides no support for such a statement. Again, this is not a motivation to combine references, but is a conclusion that has apparently been reached after having benefited from reading Applicants' own disclosure, and is thus impermissible hindsight.

Even assuming that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning, the Action provides no evidence that the combination takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, nor does the Action provide any evidence that the

combination includes knowledge other than that gleaned from Applicants' disclosure. Thus, the combination is improper based on hindsight. As the Action fails to cite any portion of *Butts* or *Cote* for the motivation to combine the references, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the present rejection.

In addition, even assuming, without admitting, that the combination of *Butts* and *Cote* is proper, the combination fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 13. Applicants', as in their previous response still contend that *Butts* fails to teach the feature in claim 13, which recites among other features, "configuring a second routing portion to map N inputs of the second routing portion to N outputs of the second routing portion in a second configuration inverse to the first configuration." The Action cites col. 2 lines 15-19 of *Butts* for support, alleging that *Butts* describes this feature, "An 'interconnect chip' is an electronically reconfigurable device which can implement arbitrary interconnections among its I/O pins. A 'routing chip' is an interconnect chip used in a direct or channel routing interconnect." The Action alleges that "[i]mplementing arbitrary interconnections among the I/O pins comprise inverse configuration." Applicants respectfully disagree.

On the contrary, "arbitrary interconnections among I/O pins" by no means implies or suggests an "inverse configuration." The fact that *Butts* describes a reconfigurable device that can implement arbitrary interconnections among its I/O pins does not imply a second configuration inverse to the first configuration. Applicants, therefore, still contend that *Butts* fails to teach or suggest, "configuring a second routing portion to map N inputs of the second routing portion to N outputs of the second routing portion in a second configuration inverse to the first configuration." As such, because the combination of *Butts* and *Cote* fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 13, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants' claims 14-17, which depend on claim 13, are patentably distinct over the art of record for at least the same reasons as their ultimate base claim and further in view of the novel features recited therein.

With respect to claim 23, the Action fails to provide any motivation in either reference to combine the two references (Action, page 8). As such, the motivation to combine the two

references for rejection of claim 23 is improper. In addition, Applicants' claim 23 includes similar features as described above with reference to claim 13. As such, Applicants' claim 23 is patentably distinct over the art of record for at least similar reasons as described with respect to claim 13.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Cote* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,874,107 to Lesea ("*Lesea*"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Even assuming, without admitting, that the combination of *Cote* and *Lesea* does teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 18, there is no proper motivation for combining the two references. The Action fails to provide any evidence in the references for motivation to combine them and merely provides its motivation to combine by stating, "[t]his modification would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time invention was made, because one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that it would provide the opportunity to verify interconnect boards including integrated circuits so that the signals can be routed correctly." (Action, page 9). Again, this is not a motivation to combine references, but is a conclusion that has apparently been reached after having benefited from reading Applicants' own disclosure, and is thus impermissible hindsight. Applicants respectfully request some support for the motivation to combine the references.

Even assuming that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning, the Action provides no evidence that the combination takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, nor does the Action provide any evidence that the combination includes knowledge other than that gleaned from Applicants' disclosure. Thus, the combination is improper based on hindsight. As the Action fails to cite any portion of *Cote* or *Lesea* for the motivation to combine the references, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the present rejection.

In addition, even assuming, without admitting, that the combination of *Cote* and *Lesea* is proper, the combination still fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 18. Applicants' claim 18 recites, among other features, "wherein the first set is configured to

provide a second test pattern to test the second set, and the second set is configured to output data in response to the second test pattern received from the first set.” The cited portion of *Lesea* states that “[i]n another embodiment, a field programmable gate array (FPGA) comprises input and output data communication connections, a serializer/deserializer circuit coupled to the output data connection. The logic array is further programmed to check a data pattern received on the input connection while performing a built in self test operation. After test, the circuit may be re-programmed as stated above.” While *Lesea* may describe a field programmable gate array (FPGA) that comprises input and output data communication connections, a serializer/deserializer circuit coupled to the output data connection, *Lesea* does not describe the above noted feature of Applicants’ claim 18. In particular, *Lesea* does not explicitly describe a second test pattern to test the second set, and the second set is configured to output data in response to the second test pattern received from the first set.

Furthermore, Applicants’ claim 18 recites, among other features, “wherein the first set is further configured to provide an *N*-bit input generator to the second set and to provide a configurable logic block, separate from the *N*-bit input generator, as a verifier to verify the output data of the second set.” Per the cited portion of *Lesea* above, *Lesea* describes a logic array that performs a built-in self test operation. Notably, the logic array performs the test operation within itself, not separately. Therefore, *Lesea* clearly fails to describe the above noted feature of Applicants’ claim 18. In particular, *Lesea* fails to explicitly describe a configurable logic block, separate from the *N*-bit input generator, as a verifier to verify the output data of the second set.

Cote fails to teach or suggest the above features of Applicants’ claim 18 as well. As such, the combination of references fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants’ claim 18 and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 19-20, 22, which depend from claim 18, are allowable over the art of record for all the reasons given above concerning their respective base claim, and further in view of the novel features recited therein.

Claim 24 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,903,744 to Tseung, et al. (“*Tseung*”) in view of *Cote*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants had cited in their previous response, a lack of proper motivation for combining *Tseung* and *Cote*. The Action still has not provided any such proper motivation. Again, even assuming, without admitting, that the combination of *Tseung* and *Cote* does teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 24, there is no proper motivation for combining the two references. The Action still fails to provide any evidence in the references for motivation to combine them and merely provides the same motivation to combine by stating, "[t]his modification would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time invention was made, because one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that it would provide the opportunity to verify interconnect boards including integrated circuits so that the signals can be routed correctly." (Action, page 9). Again, this is not a motivation to combine references, but is a conclusion that has apparently been reached after having benefited from reading Applicants' own disclosure, and is thus impermissible hindsight.

Even assuming that any judgment on obviousness is in a sense necessarily a reconstruction based upon hindsight reasoning, the Action provides no evidence that the combination takes into account only knowledge which was within the level of ordinary skill at the time the claimed invention was made, nor does the Action provide any evidence that the combination includes knowledge other than that gleaned from Applicants' disclosure. Thus, the combination is improper based on hindsight. As the Action fails to cite any portion of *Tseung* or *Cote* for the motivation to combine the references, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the present rejection.

In addition, even assuming, without admitting, that the combination of *Tseung* and *Cote* is proper, the combination fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claim 24. Applicants', as in their previous response still contend that *Cote* fails to teach the feature in claim 24, which recites, among other features, "wherein the data processing portion is configured to provide a first test pattern to the first set to test the second set and a second test pattern to the second set to test the first set." As admitted by the Action, *Tseung* fails to teach such a feature. (Action, page 10). In rejecting this feature, the Action relies on various portions of *Cote*. However, no portion of *Cote* teaches or suggests such a feature. *Cote* merely describes an implementation of FPGAs with variable gain blocks (VGB) including registers for storing

current state bits (Col. 25, lines 6-26). Another cited portion of *Cote* describes a provision “[w]ithin the contemplation of the invention to provide within computer-readable media (e.g., floppy diskettes, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM) and/or within manufactured and transmitted signals, FPGA-configuring bit streams in accordance with the above disclosure and/or to provide computer-understandable instructions to computers for causing the computers to perform automated stepping of FPGA’s under-test through a battery of reconfigurations and test loops and readouts in accordance with the above disclosure.” (Col. 27, lines 52-61). Nothing in these descriptions suggests or teaches Applicants’ claim 24 features noted above. In fact, *Cote* still describes a system that would utilize a test pattern to self-test and not to test a different set. (Col. 27, lines 18-21). As such, the combination of *Tseung* and *Cote* fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants’ claim 24 and withdrawal of the present rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 25 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tseung* in view of *Butts* and *Cote*. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As with each of the other claims rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Action fails to cite any portion of the references and/or provide any evidence to support the motivation to combine the references. Again, the combination is improper based on hindsight. As the Action fails to cite any portion of *Tseung*, *Butts*, or *Cote* for the motivation to combine the references, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the present rejection. In addition, as stated in Applicants previous response, the combination of references, even if proper, fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of claim 25. In particular, Applicants still contend as in their previous response, that none of the references teaches or suggests the claim 25 feature of, “wherein the second routing portion is configured to map N inputs of the second routing portion to N outputs of the second routing portion in a second manner inverse to the first manner.” Therefore, for at least these reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of amended claim 25 is respectfully requested. The Action asserts that *Butts* teaches this feature per col. 2 lines 15-19, which reads that “An ‘interconnect chip’ is an electronically reconfigurable device which can implement arbitrary interconnections among its I/O pins. A ‘routing chip’ is an interconnect chip used in a direct or channel routing interconnect.” The Action alleges that “[i]mplementing

arbitrary interconnections among the I/O pins comprise inverse configuration.” Applicants respectfully disagree.

On the contrary, “arbitrary interconnections among I/O pins” by no means implies or suggests an “inverse configuration.” The fact that *Butts* describes a reconfigurable device that can implement arbitrary interconnections among its I/O pins does not imply a second configuration inverse to the first configuration. Applicants, therefore, still contend that *Butts* fails to teach or suggest “configuring a second routing portion to map N inputs of the second routing portion to N outputs of the second routing portion in a second configuration inverse to the first configuration.” As such, because the combination of *Tseung*, *Butts*, and *Cote* fails to teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants’ claim 25, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

All rejections having been addressed, Applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicits prompt notification of the same. However, if for any reason the Examiner believes the application is not in condition for allowance or there are any questions, the examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at (202) 824-3155.

Respectfully submitted,
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